

Fisk University, Jubilee Hall
17th Avenue, North
Nashville
Davidson County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-19

HABS,
TENN,
19-NASH,
7A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS NO. TENN-19

FISK UNIVERSITY, JUBILEE HALL

Location: 17th Ave., North
Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee
Latitude: 36°10'02" N. Longitude: 86°48'11" W.

Present Owner: Fisk University

Present Use: Residence hall for senior women

Statement of Significance: The American Missionary Association of New York City and the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Cincinnati, assisted by Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, then in charge of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, founded Fisk University. The institution was opened in 1866 as Fisk School and was chartered as a university in 1867.

The imposing Jubilee Hall, an L-shaped six-story Victorian Gothic dormitory, is the oldest and largest building at Fisk University and the oldest permanent building for the higher education of Negroes in the United States. Designed by the New York architect Stephen D. Hatch, the handsome building was completed in 1876 with part of the money made by the first group of Jubilee Singers. In 1871 the chorus of seven women and four men students made an extensive tour of the larger northern cities, Europe, and the British Isles. Proceeds of the tour proved sufficient to purchase land for the university campus and build Jubilee Hall.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The tract of land upon which Jubilee Hall was erected and presently stands was purchased by the American Missionary Association from Thomas J. Harding in July 1872 [R.O.D.C. Deed Book 47, p. 510]; the Association transferred the property, together with other adjoining properties which it had similarly acquired, to Fisk University in October 1875 [R.O.D.C. Deed Book 54, p. 511]. The University has continued uninterrupted ownership of Jubilee Hall to the present day, the only subsequent deed actions being those of effecting and releasing mortgages.
2. Date of erection: Excavation for the foundation was begun on January 1, 1873; the cornerstone was laid on October 1, 1873; and the building was dedicated on January 1, 1876.

3. Architect: Stephen D. Hatch (1839-1894), New York, N. Y.
"Active in practice throughout nearly all of his adult years, Mr. Hatch was one of New York's well-known architects during the last quarter of the nineteenth century" [Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, 1956) p. 271].

Another person who should be mentioned here is Thomas C. Stewart Superintendent of Construction of Jubilee Hall. A wealth of correspondence between Stewart and functionaries of Fisk makes clear that his participation in the erection of Jubilee Hall and in the determination of its final appearance was considerable [Letter book of correspondence between Stewart and Erastus M. Cravath, President of Fisk University, 1872-1875. On deposit at the Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana.].

4. Builder or contractor, suppliers: Not presently known; may be contained in wealth of documentary material which has yet to be researched at the Amistad Research Center.
5. Original plans and construction: Hatch's initial design for Jubilee Hall was published as an engraving of the exterior perspective in American Missionary, XVII, no. 3 (March, 1873). The engraving was used as the frontispiece, while plans of the first and second floors are reproduced on p. 50. No drawings by Hatch's office have been located.

A detailed contemporary description of Jubilee Hall serves to illuminate something of the building as it originally stood:

"The massive proportions of Jubilee Hall strike one pleasantly as he approaches it. The building is in the form of an "L", and has an east front of 145 feet, and a south front of 128 feet. Including basement and cellar, it is six stories high, and is supplied with all the conveniences of water, steam, and gas. It is heated throughout by steam, and each room has a radiator. The entire building contains 120 rooms. Jubilee Hall is to be ultimately the Ladies' Hall of Fisk University, but until other college buildings can be erected, will be made to answer all purposes. The building is drained by a twelve-inch sewer pipe, which runs 1,500 feet to a natural aqueduct, which connects with the river. The building is made of the best pressed brick, with stone trimmings. The style is modern English. The main entrance is on the south front, and is composed of a stone stairway with pillars supporting a small stone balcony. The front door is composed of black walnut, of massive proportions, and having complete bronze trimmings. On the right of the hall are the reception rooms and parlor, one 16 by 32 feet, the other 20 by 32 feet, connected by large

folding doors. On the other side of the hall is the office, and beyond, the assembly room about 20 by 32 feet in size. Opposite this on the cross hall is the library, adjoining it the music room, and further on smaller rooms that are to be used as dressing rooms for visitors and transient guests. The dining room is in the eastern portion of the building. It is 38 by 90 feet, and will seat 300 persons. It has two rows of columns through the centre. Beyond the dining room is the pantry, supplied with every convenience. A dumb waiter connects with the kitchen below. There are china closets, with innumerable drawers and shelves, dish basins, etc. Opposite the pantry is the matron's sitting room, having a private stairway connecting with her bed chamber on the next floor. On this floor one finds himself in the dormitory department. Each room is intended to accomodate two students, and besides double beds, is furnished with bureau, wash stand, table, book rack and three chairs. Every room has two closets. The furniture is made of solid black walnut. Forty of the sets were obtained by Mrs. Clinton B. Fisk, and forty others were given by friends in Great Britain. Each bed has a straw mattress and a heavy cotton pad upon it. The three upper stories are fac similes one of the other. All are divided into bedchambers and all furnished exactly alike. Each floor has bath rooms with hot and cold water, water closets and wash closets. Three tanks in the attic, holding thirty barrels each, supply the entire water convenience, and they are in turn supplied from five cisterns in the cellar, holding 25,000 barrels of water. Each floor has also four fire plugs with fifty feet of hose and a nozzle each. Descending to the basement story one sees in one portion of it the entire steam heating apparatus. Near this is the laundry department with ironing room and drying room, complete in every particular. In the other extreme end of the basement is the kitchen, a commodious apartment, 20 by 40 feet. The range occupies a position upon a cement floor, thus lessening the dangers from fire. In the kitchen are four copper steam kettles, connected with and operated by the steam heating apparatus. Adjoining the kitchen is the kitchen pantry, the oven room, and the bakery, all admirably fitted for the purposes for which they are intended."

"The basement also contains rooms that have been fitted up as recitation rooms, having a black-board extending all around. These will serve the purpose until another building can be erected for a boys' dormitory and more suitable recitation rooms."

"The front halls and stairways are wainscoted with beautiful wood, alternated in dark and light, brought from the Mendi Mission, West Africa. The rest of the wainscoting throughout the entire building together with doors, door facings, cornices, etc., is made of white pine, which is varnished" [Fisk University (New York, 1876), pp. 8-10].

To the description of the front hall stairway should be added the following extract from a contemporary account: "The newell post of the main stairway is a curious gem and will always call forth observation. It is composed of twenty-nine different kinds of wood: 1. Coco, 2. White Holly, 3. Cocobola, 4. Leopard, 5. Careta, 6. Shomac, 7. Brayitetto, 8. Olive, 9. Birdseye Maple, 10. Siger, 11. California Lamel, 12. Woodyard, or wood of the ark, 13. Japanese Lamel, 14. Gak burl, 15. Florida cedar, 16. Ash burl, 17. Maple burl, 18. Butternut burl, 19. Hungarian ash, 20. Curley comino, 21. Mahogany crotch, 22. Satin wood crotch, 23. Tulip, 24. Thug, 25. Rosewood, 26. French wal, 27. Palm, 28. American wal crotch, and 29. Ebony" [Nashville Daily American, January 2, 1876].

6. Alterations and additions: Unfortunately, no records in any form have been uncovered to make clear the various stages of remodeling and alteration made to the building.

Two notable departures on the exterior design can be seen from Hatch's initial design (publication noted above) and the building as it apparently was built, depicted in Clayton's History of Davidson County, Tennessee (Philadelphia, 1880), n.p.n., and the way it stands today. The first has to do with the iron cresting and finials which Hatch noted initially but which seem never to have been applied in actual construction. The second, similarly, relates to the contour of the tower surmounting the southeast corner of the building. In his original drawing, noted above, Hatch indicated a low-curvilinear profile for the cupola crowning the tower. The cupola as it was constructed and as it presently stands, however, is conical and perhaps twice as tall, although it rests on the same octagonal base.

The only substantial alteration about which anything is known, and for which documentation exists is the one performed in 1965. At that time, the interior was completely rebuilt to provide modern dormitory facilities. Heavy timbers were removed from the interior structure, which was replaced by a steel and concrete frame. The paneling and the main stairway of the entry hall were preserved, although the latter was relocated. The exterior was preserved substantially as it had been prior to the renovation, with the following modifications: dormer windows were bricked up on the southeast corner and end pavilions; the central window on the first and second floors of the north or rear facade were also bricked over; fire escapes were removed from the north, west, and east facades; new stone porches with brick parapets were built for the north, east, and west entrances (part of the stone was taken from the foundation of the demolished porch on the rear or north facade); doors in these entrances were also rebuilt [See Godwin & Beckett, Inc., Architects. "Renovations to Jubilee Hall, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee." H.H.F.A. Project CH-TENN-71-(D). Commission No. 855. Set of "as built" and working drawings]. The remaining portion of the

exterior was refurbished as necessary [Idem.]

7. Important old views: As has been mentioned, Hatch's initial design for Jubilee Hall was published as an engraving of the exterior perspective on the frontispiece of the American Missionary, XVII, no. 3 (March, 1873), and the plans for the first and second floors are printed on p. 50.

The identical engraving was reproduced in the Catalogue of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, for the years 1876 to 1882, inclusive.

A positive photostat reproduction of an engraving is on deposit in the "Views of the Campus" file in the Special Collection section of Fisk University Main Library. Though undated and unidentified (the original source of the engraving is unknown), it would appear to date from the time the building was erected. It is noteworthy that, here, the cupola is already depicted in the conical shape in which it was completed, although the iron cresting and finials are included in this reproduction.

A drawing of Jubilee Hall is published in W. W. Clayton, History of Davidson County, Tennessee (Philadelphia, 1880). It depicts the building very likely as it appeared when erected. The tower and cupola is rendered much as it stands today, and no cresting or finials appear along the ridges of the roof.

An excellent etched photograph of the exterior of Jubilee Hall is published in Art Work of Nashville (Chicago: W. H. Parish, 1894), in Part 7, n.p.n.

A photograph of similar quality and providing a comparable view is contained in Art Work of Nashville, Tennessee (Chicago: Gravure Illust. Co., 1901), in Part 8, n.p.n.

A photograph of Jubilee Hall is published in the Fisk University News, II, no. 5 (October, 1911), p. 53.

Numerous photographs dating from the first half of the twentieth century are on deposit in the "Views of the Campus" File in the Special Collections file at the Fisk University Main Library.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

In the fall of 1865, Rev. E. P. Smith, Field Secretary of the American Missionary Association, and the Rev. E. M. Cravath, recently appointed Secretary of the Middle-West Department of the Association, established a school for colored people in Nashville by purchasing the property and buildings of a government "railroad hospital" that was situated west of the Chattanooga depot. Through the efforts of Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, then chief of the Freedmen's

Bureau for Tennessee, the buildings on the land were turned over to the Association for educational purposes. The school which was opened on January 9, 1866 under the auspices of the American Missionary Association of New York and the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Cincinnati, was named Fisk School in honor of Gen. Fisk and his efforts on its behalf.

In August 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau, through Gen. O. O. Howard, gave \$7,000 to the School, the Peabody Fund generously granted \$800 a year, and Fisk University was chartered August 22 of that year with a board of nine trustees, of which Gen. Fisk was President. In 1875 Rev. E. M. Cravath, who had toiled unceasingly for the establishment of Fisk University, became its President.

The construction of Jubilee Hall was made possible by the money that was raised by the first group of Jubilee Singers. The group was organized in 1871 by George L. White, music teacher at Fisk. That year, a chorus of seven women and four men students made an extensive tour of the largest northern cities in the United States, as well as of Europe and the British Isles. Their singing of Negro spirituals was so enthusiastically received that the proceeds of the tour amounted to more than \$150,000, sufficient to purchase the university campus and build Jubilee Hall.

C. Sources of Information

1. Primary sources:

Letter book of correspondence of Thomas C. Stewart, Superintendent of Construction for Jubilee Hall (1872-1875). On deposit in the American Missionary Association Archives at Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Letters and papers located in the American Missionary Association Archives at the Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Register's Office for Davidson County, Tennessee.
Deed Book 38, p. 339 [Charter of Fisk U.]
Deed Book 47, p. 510
Deed Book 54, p. 511
Plat Book 21, p. 107

2. Secondary and published sources:

"After Forty Years: The Jubilee Singers," Fisk University News, II, no. 5 (October, 1911). Entire issue.

Catalogue of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee.
1876-1880, inclusive.

Clayton, W. W. "Fisk University," in his History of Davidson County, Tennessee, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men (Philadelphia, J. W. Lewis & Co., 1880), pp. 260-262.

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Eaton, James N. "The Life of Erastus Milo Cravath." Unpublished Master's thesis, Fisk University, 1959.

Federal Writers' Project. "Fisk University," Tennessee: A Guide to the State (New York: Viking Press, 1939), pp. 203-204.

"Fisk University," History of the American Missionary Association: Its Churches and Educational Institutions Among the Freedmen, Indians, and Chinese. New York: S. W. Green, 1874.

Fisk University. History, Building and Site, and Services of Dedication at Nashville, Tennessee, January 1st, 1876.
New York: Trustees of Fisk University, 1876.

Hopkins, Alphonso A. The Life of Clinton Bowen Fisk. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1910.

Marsh, J. B. I., editor. The Story of the Jubilee Singers. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877.

Moore, John T. and Foster, Austin P., editors. "Erastus Milo Cravath," Tennessee, the Volunteer State, IV, 1769-1923 (Nashville: S. J. Clark, 1923), pp. 723-724.

Pike, Gustavus D. Singing Campaign for Ten Thousand Pounds. New York: American Missionary Association, 1875.

Richardson, Joe M. "Fisk University: The First Critical Years," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXIX, no. 1 (Spring, 1970), pp. 24-41.

Strieby, M. E. "Jubilee Hall," American Missionary, XVII, no. 3 (March, 1873), pp. 50-52; see also fronticepiece.

Taylor, Alnitheus A. The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880.
Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1941.

Tipton, C. Robert. "The Fisk Jubilee Singers," Tennessee
Historical Quarterly, XXIX, no. 1 (Spring, 1970),
pp. 42-48.

Withey, Henry F. and Rathburn, Elsie. "Stephen C. Hatch,"
in their Biographical Dictionary of American Architects
(Deceased) (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956),
p. 271.

Prepared by: Anatole Senkevitch, Jr.
Architectural Historian
& Architect
National Park Service
Summer, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Jubilee Hall is a L-shaped six-story Victorian Gothic dormitory. It was designed by the New York architect Stephen D. Hatch.
2. Condition of fabric: Well-maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 145' x 128'.
2. Number of stories: Six.
3. Layout: L-shaped.
4. Foundations: Limestone.
5. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick walls, common bond. Terracotta parapet gables. Stone bonding except on the north side.
6. Structural system: Masonry bearing walls.
7. Porches: Front entrance composed of stone stairway with four columns supporting small stone balcony. There are four balconies across the south facade. Three with cast iron railing. There are three brick porches. Seven balconies with 3 cast iron railings and four brick railings.

8. Chimneys: Ornamental terracotta capped chimneys (7).
9. Doors: Main entrance is on the south front. The front door is composed of black walnut, of massive proportions with brass knobs. Two light transoms above.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Large entry hall with rooms off each next to stairways. Large lobby contains check desk access to two service stairs, an elevator, two sitting rooms and a grand stairway to the upper levels. The basement and floors above main level have been completed modernized.
2. Stairways: Exterior stairways are of stone. The primary stair has large octagonal newel post and turned ballusters.
3. Flooring: Main floor has parquet wooden floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster with paneled wainscot in lobby, paneling continues under window seats.
5. Doors: Five recessed panel wooden doors.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting: Jubilee Hall faces south atop hill overlooking Fisk University campus and downtown Nashville.

Prepared by: Roy C. Pledger
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
Summer, 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the National Park Service in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Historic Sites Federation of Tennessee. Measured and drawn July 1970, under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Roy C. Pledger, project supervisor (Texas A&M University), Anatole Senkevitch, Jr., historian (University of Virginia), by student architects Donald W. Graham and William H. Edwards (University of Illinois), and Donna G. Woodrum and Robert J. Dunay (Virginia Polytechnic Institute), at the Historic American Buildings Survey field office, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. The photographer was Jack E. Boucher of the HABS staff.

ALDENBURG, TN

FISKE UNIVERSITY, JUBILEE HALL
17th Avenue North
Nashville
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HABS No. TN-19

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Tennessee		COUNTY Davidson	TOWN OR VICINITY Nashville
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Jubilee Hall, Fisk University			HABS NO. TN-19
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE			
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 17th Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee			
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1873-76 (stonework & NHL Catalog 1985)		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Stephen D. Hatch	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The oldest building on the campus. Fiske was founded by the American Missionary Assoc. to provide a liberal arts education for blacks after the Civil War. Interesting Victorian Gothic structure.			
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Victorian Gothic Revival			
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick and stone			
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE)			
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE open belfry tower, facade pavilion with Gothic portico supported by stone columns on pedestals, arched stone lintels and sills, stone belt courses, corbelled brick cornice, gabled wall dormers, free standing stone capped brick chimneys			
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) grand stairway open at the bottom with turned balustrade, mural on a wall of the Appleton Room			
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES			
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE college building, used to house the ball room, activity rooms, etc.			
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE			
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Catalog of National Historic Landmarks, 1985 (n.p.) and the National Register of Historic Places catalog for 1969.			
COMPILER, AFFILIATION C. Crawford, Historian, HABS/HAER			DATE April 1987